



# Bullet'n Backstory

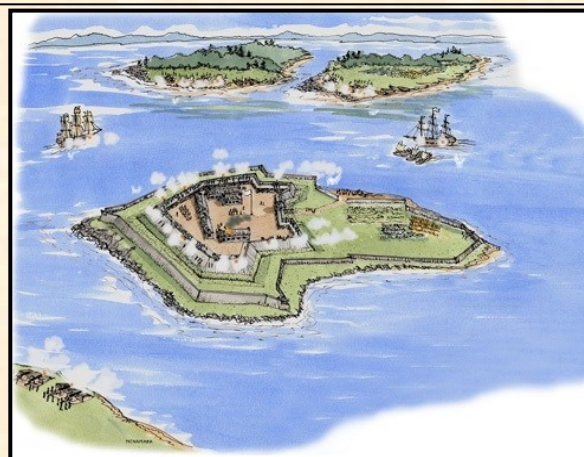
Joint Munitions Command

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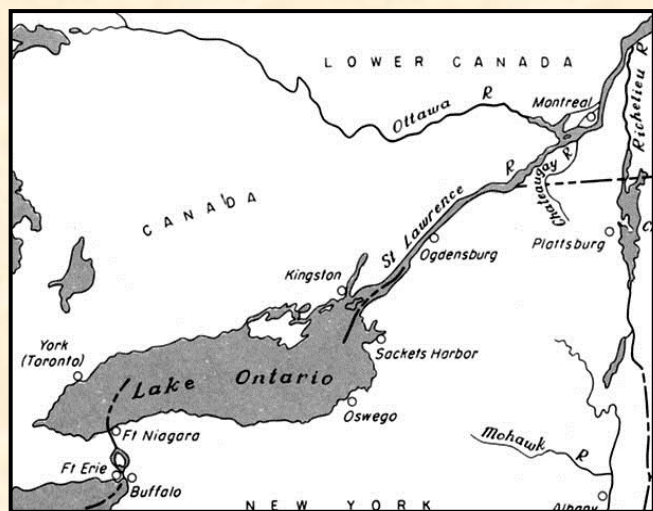
December 2016

## Battle of the Thousand Islands (Aug 1760)

In the summer of 1760, six years into the French & Indian War, French forces in the Great Lakes region made a final stand against the British. For eight days in August, the French delayed a British advance on Montreal by defending fortified positions in and along the Thousand Islands section of the St. Lawrence River Valley. The primary engagement took place at Fort Lévis, on what is present-day Chimney Island, near Ogdensburg, New York. Fort Lévis, the primary French position between Lake Ontario and Montreal, was charged with preventing a British assault on the city from the southwest. The fort's designer planned a stone structure with space for 200 cannon and 2,500 defenders. However, when Capt. Pierre Pouchot took command that August, he discovered 200 soldiers defending a wooden stockade with just five cannon. Pouchot's forces also included 200 sailors and 21 heavy cannon on two ships, *L'Iroquoise* and *L'Outaouaise*, but the former ran aground on 1 August. On 7 August, French scouts stationed between Fort Lévis and Lake Ontario spotted two British ships, the *Onondaga* and *Mohawk*, carrying 190 sailors, 55 soldiers, and 34 cannon under the command of Capt. Joshua Long. The scouts rowed 40 miles



Fort Lévis, St. Lawrence River,  
French & Indian War  
Illustration by Robert McNamara



to warn the garrison at Fort Lévis, avoiding capture when the enemy ships got lost amid the Thousand Islands. On 10 August, a force of British soldiers under Gen. Jeffrey Amhurst left Oswego and arrived at Fort Lévis on 16 August. Amhurst quickly captured *L'Outaouaise* using a rowboat assault and then utilized the former French ship, renamed the *Williamson*, to attack Fort Lévis on 19 August. Late the following day, the *Onondaga* and *Mohawk* joined the battle, whereupon all three ships were lost. Even so, Pouchot was forced to surrender when the British set fire to the fort. The British lost 26 men at the Battle of the Thousand Islands, while the French lost 275 of their 300 remaining defenders. As a result, the path to Montreal lay open. The British subsequently besieged the city, which surrendered on 8 September. After that, the war in North America essentially came to an end. ~ Dr. Paul-Thomas Ferguson, JMC Archivist

## From the Archives ~ History of Trench Art

The term "trench art" refers to any decorative item made by soldiers, prisoners, or civilians during a time of war. The manufacture of trench art often serves as a welcome distraction for those living under difficult wartime conditions, providing a way for people to pass the time while serving in prisoner-of-war camps, awaiting orders, or struggling through long recuperative hospital stays. These unique items have been kept as souvenirs and used as barter for food, tobacco, or special privileges. War souvenirs have been traced as least as far back as the Ancient Roman Era, though the modern phenomenon of trench art production dates from the Napoleonic Wars. Examples have come from every major conflict over the past two centuries. However, due to the widespread creation of such items during World War I, such items are commonly referred to as trench art, regardless of the war from which they originate.

In every case, artisans manufacture trench art using whatever materials are available. Some items are carved from wood, stone, and animal bones. Other examples involve weaving or embroidery. Some use natural materials, ranging from art carved into unmovable stones and walls to impressions of small items made in portable slabs of soft clay. Usually, trench art incorporates pieces of wartime materiel, including cartridges and shell casings, along with items like buttons and coins. The results come in a variety of forms, including decorative carvings and statues, jewelry, vases, ashtrays, cups, pitchers, crucifixes, knives, lighters, candlesticks, lamps, clocks, picture frames, bookends, toys, cigarette cases, eating utensils, belt buckles, tapestries, replicas, and miniature models, along with various boxes and containers.

To see examples visit the Trench Art exhibit, showing in the JMC Display Room (6th floor, South) from December through March. Contact Historian Keri Pleasant (x20392) or Archivist Paul Ferguson (x20060) for access.

Do you have historical items? If so, please contact the Archivist: Room 661  
Dr. Paul-Thomas Ferguson - x20060 - paul.t.ferguson14.civ@mail.mil.



Brass lighter (British, World War I)

## This Month in Military History

December 5, 1941: Russian counter-offensive pushes the German Army out of Moscow.

December 12, 627: Sassanid Persian ruler Rhahzadh, after losing 6,000 men at the Battle of Nineveh, dies in single combat versus the Byzantine Emperor Heraclius.

December 19, 1861: Col. Jefferson C. Davis, with the 4th U.S. Cavalry, captures 684 Confederate recruits at Blackwater Creek, Missouri.

December 26, 1776: Gen. George Washington defeats Hessians at the Battle of Trenton, New Jersey.